8: Calvert G-3 (1964) 1909 A.4 W. Tibetans A.4
Spiti 49a

Divorce.

A son-in-law who has been adopted cannot be divorced by his wife as in Ladâkh. 586

There is no custom in Spiti of a widow divorcing herself from her dead husband.

Unfaithfulness and refusal to cohabit are reasons for divorce, but incompatibility of temper is not.

In cases of divorce both parties go to the Nono.

If the woman is in fault, her jewels and *perik* (head ornament) and a pony are given to the husband. If the man is in fault, a field is given to the woman for her maintenance, but she can only retain it so long as she does not marry again. The man may re-marry. [587]

A wife's adultery is usually condoned by the present of a few rupees to the injured husband. A husband's unfaithfulness usually only results in a quarrel. A single lapse is not ground for a divorce, and only cohabitation with his paramour can give his wife right to a divorce. 586 937

Pregnancy.

A married woman wears white breeches till she is pregnant, when she wears red or black. Unmarried girls wear white breeches up to twelve and afterwards red or black. 843 292

Naming.

The name of a child is selected by a *lâma* after reference to the Sacred Books, who receives for the service a *khâta*, or piece of cloth, such as is given by visitors to a monastery. 553 793

When naming the child, the *lâma* places a little bit of cloth upon it, or, if the child be not present, sends the cloth to its parents.

In every monastery *kesar*, or green, water is kept; *i.e.*, water in which *kêsar*, saffron, has been placed. And sometimes, but not always, when naming a child, the *lâma* sprinkles it with *kêsar* water.

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by people who cannot write, is a sign of the well-being 000

13: Heber and Heber D-3 (1914-25) 1926 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

layettes over which the occidental mother spends so many loving hours, no preparations of clothing are made, but as soon as he has arrived safely, some cloth is fetched from the bazar in which to wrap him. Before his birth his mother must eat a great deal of fat to "oil the wheels" well for his arrival. One other preparation has been made, for goat's dung has been collected, dried (and incidently somewhat sterilized) in the hot sun, then crushed up finely. This powder is then placed on a sheepskin, upon which Baby is laid, and thus all his excretions are absorbed, the powder being changed every day or two. Lactation is continued as long as possible, sometimes to the third year, but the child is also allowed to eat other food, just as he fancies. Some women once visited the Doctor Memsahib on a winter evening and were astonished when she took them to peep at her baby, for had she not left the sleeping child alone, in the dark, and in a cold room with the window wide open? Their babies on the contrary sit on their mothers' laps or crawl about until the grown-ups go to bed, tasting all the supper, and enjoying the warmth, not to say stuffiness, of the big stove, as well as all the light and conversation. While still a tiny mite, Baby is slung in a cloth over the back of his small sister, who makes a little picture of premature motherliness, as she goes to her work or play with a bobbing baby on her back.

It is extraordinary how alike childhood is all the world over. These children have a game called the wolf and lamb, very similar to our fox and sheep, in which they will sing "The wolf is not there; to the horse gate we'll go." Then the wolf comes out, and the mother sheep with outstretched arms has to try to protect her little ones, who stand behind her in order of height, while the bad wolf seizes the last and smallest, one after the other until all have been stolen. Then there is a kind of hopscotch, which has come up from India, and an indigenous hide-and-seek called *Yib-ches-lo-lo*. And of course the boys have their games of fashioning idols on the

21: Asboe M-3 (no date) 1932 AJ4 West Tibetans AJ4

841

Notes on Childbirth in Manchat (Western Tibet). *By Walter Asboe.*

161

Certain taboos exist in Manchat in respect to women during their period of menstruation, and also for expectant mothers. During menstruation a woman is not allowed to approach the family hearth, but must eat her food, and perform her household duties at a reasonable distance from the fireplace. She may not wash or handle the kitchen utensils during this period, for she is regarded as ceremonially unclean; and any infraction of the taboo imposed upon her is thought to be a direct affront to the god of the family hearth.

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No restrictions, however, in the way of performing the ordinary domestic duties are laid upon the pregnant woman except that she must be on her guard against the influence of the 'Evil Eye.' She will therefore retire discreetly on the approach of a stranger. A woman may not on any account bear her child in the vicinity of the household temple, or where there are any images of the gods. An apartment in the rear of the house is therefore reserved for this purpose, and failing this, she must retire to an outhouse or shed.

To cite a personal experience, I was once called to a case of difficult labour, and I found the patient lying in a dark room quite by herself. On urging the occupants of the house to remove the expectant mother to another room where one could at least enjoy the advantage of light and air, they replied that they could not comply with my request, as, by so doing, they would incur the displeasure of their household gods. Further, it is taboo for the daughter of the house to give birth to her child in her own home, so that what frequently happens is that she must find refuge in the shelter of the cowshed.

At a confinement, any cooked food which happens to be in the house is taboo, and must be thrown away, or given to the cattle. Following the birth of a child, the mother is obliged to emerge from the house, accompanied by one or two women, and proceed to the nearest spring. On arrival there, a screen of blankets is erected, behind which she must perform her ablutions. After the birth of the first child, the mother has to wash herself three times, whilst the husband must also purify himself by bathing. By way of propitiating the evil spirits, the mother scatters grain or food hither and thither as she proceeds to the village spring to cleanse herself.

It is also customary to stick an iron trident and an axe into the ground when the ablutions have been performed. In the meantime the placenta is buried in the earth, the hole being dug with the knife which was used for cutting the cord, and the handle of the knife is buried also. During the woman's absence, the floors of the house are freshly mud-washed, and all utensils thoroughly scoured. Should another house lie contiguous to the one in which a confinement occurs, the occupants behave as if the birth had actually taken place in it. On the completion of the ceremonial purification, the mother is covered in a large blanket with two slits in it for the eyes, and returns to her home.

WALTER ASBOE.

[139]